

**Two days National Seminar  
on  
Maharaja Ranbir Singh and the making of the Princely  
state of Jammu and Kashmir**

**(26-27 April, 2022)**

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Department of History, University of Jammu, in collaboration with Maharaja Gulab Singh Research Centre, Jammu and NIIT, New Delhi plan to hold a two days National Seminar on 'Maharaja Ranbir Singh and the making of the Princely state of Jammu and Kashmir' on 26-27 April, 2022.

The need of the Seminar is rooted in the nature of existing historiography, both local and trans local, on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. Those engaged in the craft of writing history of the state have either been preoccupied with listing the phenomenal rise and exceptional exploits of Maharaja Gulab Singh, the founder of the state, or in making critical, often perjured, assessment of the period of Maharaja Hari Singh, who presided over the merger of state into Indian state. Caught between the polarity of adulation and criticality, the historian has unwittingly allowed to turn a proper documentation and the assessment of the significance of the rule of Maharaja Ranbir Singh as theme of marginal concern for any historical discourse on the state. This unargued marginality of interest has led to a paucity of historical work detailing or, even documenting, the significance of his exceptional vision, his brilliant strategies and statesmanship; particularly his tireless efforts to turn the , multi-religious, multi cultural, multi linguistics subjects , distributed across geographically diverse segments of spaces within the territoriality of the state, into one politically homogenised state, to be know in the contemporary world for peace, harmony and cultural syncretism. The history of his life and the contributions that he made in the realm of society polity and economy of India in general and of Jammu and Kashmir in particular, is truly fascinating and inspirational. Thus while Maharaja Gulab Singh was truly the founder of the state, Maharaja Ranbir Singh was not only the consolidator but also the maker of how the state came to be imaged and imagined by the people, both within and beyond the state in the time to come.

The context in which Maharaja ascended the throne was not a comfortable one. The newly created state was still in the making. It looked more like a loosely knit conglomeration of several distinct geographical, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic units. The political entity existing at the periphery of the state such as Gigit, Baltistan, Hunza and Nagar, Ponial and Yasin also posed a serious threat to the territorial sovereignty of the state. The economy also needed urgent reorganisation. What complicated the situation further was the fact that the powerful Colonial authority was aggressively trying to encroach upon the royal authority of the state. Maharaja Ranbir Singh, however, showed remarkable skill to negotiate with this difficult situation and soon turn the state as one of the largest, well administrated, culturally progressive state. He was spectacularly successful in securing the boundaries of the state, bringing firmly the entire territories under a modern administrative structure. He went on to formulate and operationalise the legal code, known as Ranbir Penal code, which provided the conceptual foundation of his administration. While his efforts to modernise the postal, education and revenue system put the state on the path of rapid progress, his patronage to literature and architecture, his religious and cultural policy, went a long way in the making of syncretic cultural space which became the hallmark of the state. His contribution in the field of religious structure changed the entire landscape giving it the name of the City of temples. Thus, seen in the context in which he was situated at the initial years of his rein, Maharaja Ranbir Singh truly comes out as a remarkable personality who deserves place greater than what historiography of Jammu in particular and that of Indian history in general has accorded him so far.

The Seminar, therefore, aims to bring together historians, academicians, research scholars working on or around the theme having bearing on historical development of his period, in order to bring out an anthology on his contribution to Indian history in general and that of the state in particular. The major engagements in the conference would consist of the evaluation of the situation in which Maharaja Ranbir Singh inherited the throne and how, despite the constant pressure of the colonial dispensation, went on to turn his state as one of the most modern and progressive princely state of his time. The theme of how he managed with administrative dexterity the peripheral region of his empire such as Gilgit, Baltistasn, Hunza etc, shall be part of special session of the Seminar. We will also reflect upon current discourse on historiography of the period and the region to examine some of the issues and problems

that arise in the process of rewriting the history of the Maharaja and the manifold long-term contributions that he made in the process of the modernisation of the state.

Some of the Broad themes that we intend to cover in the seminar, include, but not limited to , the following:

1. Revisiting historiography on Maharaja Ranbir Singh
2. Examination of the context of his rule: Political Configuration within the state and the relation with colonial authority
3. Managing the power at the periphery: Relation with Gigit, Baltistan, Hunza and Nagar, Ponial and Yasin
4. Maharaja and his agenda of reform: Political, Economic and administrative reforms
5. Cultural and religious reforms: Making of Centres of learning and religious architecture, contribution to the growth of Indology.

#### ➤ **Call for Abstracts**

The soft copy of the abstract with a maximum of **500 words**, double spaced (**in Times New Roman font size 12**) should be sent for acceptance at **sushmajb07@gmail.com** by 15 April,2022.

#### **Final Submission of Papers**

The participants are expected to bring the final paper for the presentation . It can also be sent in advance on **sushmajb07@gmail.com** .

The desirable format of the paper is as follow:

Double spaced (**in Times Roman on size 12**), within the range of **15 to 20 pages**.